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DEPARTMENT FOR A/C FOR LISA KORTE

EO. 12958: DECL: 02/02/2020  
TAGS: [PARM](#) [PGOV](#) [PRE](#) [GB](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: GABON: FOREIGN MINISTRY NON-COMITTAL ON IRAN

REF: A. A: STATE 9124  
[1](#)B. : 09 STATE 120288

Classified By: Ambassador Eunice Reddick for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. Ambassador met with Gabon's Deputy Foreign Minister Jules Marius Ogoebandja to discuss Iran's non-compliance on nuclear issues and the importance of Gabon's cooperation now that it has joined the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member. Ogoebandja stated that Gabon's Security Council consultations in Washington this week will help inform Gabon's policy on Iran. Gabon hopes that constructive dialog will remain a priority for dealing with Iran's nuclear enrichment program. Ogoebandja was non-committal, but stated that he would pass on our concerns. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Ambassador delivered demarche (ref A) on February 1 to Deputy Foreign Minister Jules Marius Ogoebandja. Gabon's Director of the America's Desk Bika Bisso, Director of International Organizations Ndzenze, and poloff attended the meeting.

[1](#)3. (C) Ogoebandja thanked the Ambassador for relaying the U.S. position on Iran and noted Gabon's eagerness to play a constructive role on the UNSC. He said that he expects formal UNSC consultations between the United States and Gabon will produce useful information to provide "the complete picture" on the Iran issue. Gabon's Permanent Representative York is in Washington this week for UNSC consultations. Ogoebandja said that he would convey U.S. concerns and their importance to the Foreign Minister, the Permanent Representative in New York, and President Bongo Ondimba.

[1](#)4. (C) Ogoebandja noted Gabon prefers an emphasis on diplomacy and "an open dialog" as the primary methods to gain Iranian compliance on all UNSC resolutions. He added that Gabon appreciates President Obama's "open door" to Iran and will do what it can to help Iran reciprocate. Ogoebandja was non-committal on the issue of implementing harsher measures against Iran.

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COMMENT

[1](#)5. (C) Ogoebandja's lack of commitment comes as no surprise given that Gabon has just joined the UNSC and is just beginning to formulate position on key issues, such as Iran. In the past, Gabon abstained or absented itself for many key votes at the United Nations. Gabon does not have significant ties with Iran, but is a member of the African Union and the Organization of Islamic Conference and could take some cues from these regional memberships. Nonetheless, Gabon wants to be a constructive player on international issues and welcomes engagement with the U.S. on Iran. END COMMENT.

REDDICK